

## Autobiography

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Probably the most important influence in determining my ways of acting was my twin sister, Peggy. Although we are not identical, we give that first impression, and especially when we were younger, it was hard to distinguish between us. Childhood, as a twin, is a lot of fun. One's very twinness is a card of introduction to all people of all ages. Peggy and I grew up under the curious eyes of friends and strangers. To be sure, the constant comparison and the fact that we were considered two halves of one whole by many people were often trying. We have Mother to thank that we ~~did~~ did not become too dependent on our relationship. She treated us as individuals, let us go separate ways and dress differently as we desired it. Thus our struggle for individuality was necessary only away from home. As we grew older the differences became more apparent. Peggy was less interested in people and less dependent on them than I was. She was more ambitious and studious. As I look back I am sure that I worked in school more to keep up to Peggy than for any interest <sup>in the task,</sup> (or desire of my own) in the task. It was not until I was a junior in high school that I really became excited over the information yet to be learned. (Just the same we graduated from high school

with almost identical averages).

A twin is like a mother and a best friend together.

~~Knowing~~ <sup>Sharing</sup> all your experiences, she develops an understanding of them. Being your age, she sees them from the same point of view. And yet, she imposes the censures of the family code. She suffers for your social blunders as much as you. Therefore twins have a certain responsibility to each other as well as a very strong bond of friendship. ~~and~~ As we talked over the day together, discussed friends and each other's actions, I think we developed a deeper understanding of human natures than many our age. We learned to share & forgive and most of all to listen. In our relations with others, we could count on their interest in us. We thus were confident and secure in meeting new people. We enjoyed laughing at their amazement and kidding them about who was who. Being a twin gave an added zest to living that we exploited fully.

Another strong influence was my parents' value on responsibility and reason. They delighted in seeing us grow up, develop new skills and better judgement. Thus my father ~~stump~~ let us help him fix things though our efforts were at best clumsy. At the age of six ~~the~~ we were allowed to ride our two-wheeler bikes to

school, although the authorities frowned upon it. Perhaps <sup>my parents'</sup> ~~their~~ attitude is best summed up in my father's remark when questioned about the advisability of letting Peggy & ~~me~~ drive to Maine from New York, <sup>last summer.</sup> Asked if we were good drivers he replied, "I don't know, but they will be when they get here." Mother and Dad

placed a high value on individuality and family solidarity. Thus each one of us girls were assured of our position as an important member of the family. At the same time we were taught to value each other's position. Fights, quarrels were comparatively few and petered out earlier than in most families, I have found.

We did a great many things as a family. Every summer we drove to Maine and took a tent alone. <sup>even</sup> When Peggy & I were only four, we loved this experience. Dad did the cooking. Mother relaxed & we all gathered wood. When we went to bed, whether we slept or not, ~~was~~ <sup>now</sup> unimportant. This was a holiday.

Our first summers at camp brought about an almost revolutionary change in many of our patterns of behavior. We were nine and had not yet been under much pressure at home to be neat. Now we learned to make beds and put our own clothes away. Here again we had each other for support and being away from home was not as difficult for us as others. Up to this time I had never been very good in gym. This summer at camp literally loosened me up, & I went

back to school to become a member of the tumbling club (a great honor). Throughout high school I participated in sports, as will be shown later. Considering that I was never very good, I'm am grateful for the camp experience that enabled me to enjoy it as much as I did. Camp also ~~was the scene~~ offered many new & firm friendships. In later years I enjoyed tennis & boating most, and finally taught these to younger campers, although I did not stay long enough to be a counsellor.

Perhaps the most broadening experience I had was our trip to Europe in 1937. At this time Dad felt that if we did not see the continent then, we never would. So he bundled us all off - third class to see the foreign countries from the bottom up. On the boat we got to know our waiter well & finally he ushered us up to the first class playrooms. England ~~and~~ did not impress me much, but I fell in love with Sweden with its rectangular hay stacks and gay costumes. Peggy and I stayed at a Swedish camp while our parents and Joan, our older sister, went through Finland and Russia. Here was a delightful new culture! We slept in bunks, worked in the mornings, ate strange foods, and listened to another language. In many ways these ten days were the highlight of our trip. Peggy & I made some firm friends and ~~there~~ enjoyed meeting so many children. (The rest of the trip was mostly within an adult world)

We had to have an interpreter at first. One of the older children helped out. Many times we had to explain that there were no Indians running around New York! Luckily we loved to eat, and soon adjusted to the food - even to the bowl of sour milk at each noon meal. We played Swedish games and sang Swedish songs.

We met so many different people, especially in France, where we lived with a family in a little fishing village near Le Havre. Here we got some feeling for the French family life. This was the only place where the ~~new~~ different language was frustrating. ~~For~~ While in Sweden Dad had been able to converse in German with the people, there had not been too much conversation. Now both my parents & Joan knew enough French to talk to the people. This meant that Peggy and I were often at a loss. However much we tried, we could not understand the dining room talk. Since French meals are long, social affairs, this proved most difficult. We played on the beach with French children & in one sense found that behavior is language. We watched the French version of a circus and their way of celebrating birthdays. In general we received our first lesson in anthropology during this trip.

When we came home I carried over my sympathy with those who cannot converse with others. Thus I immediately felt

for Kathleen. Kathleen was Belgian and not too intelligent. I pulled her through history and gym and saw so much of her that Mother asked me why. For the ~~first time~~ first time I questioned my motives. It seemed that I had never questioned whether I liked her or not; she was confused; I knew how she felt and wanted to help her. Nor could I then desert her. It is probably lucky for me that Kathleen moved out of town the end of the year.

In high school <sup>history</sup> I became particularly interested in the Negro problem. We discussed the conditions and battled theories both in class and in Forum. In Forum we also helped Harris Wofford crystallize his ideas of Federal Union - not that we agreed with him then or now. The last two years of high school I found myself more interested in the "big problems, general theories and concepts. I began to look at history from the point of view of democracy. And at last knowledge ~~had~~ seemed a useful tool for me. The thrill of digging out material that I <sup>really</sup> wanted to know was a most impressive one.

As editor of the magazine, I found that I enjoyed planning organizing & working with other people. Likewise as a leader in gym I was particularly good at getting people to work & enjoy it. I had more patience than other leaders, perhaps because I was not much better than average myself. High school was an exciting time intellectually & socially, but sometimes I think

I did my growing up at work in the summer.

When I was sixteen I worked as a playground assistant in a New York Public School. I wanted to see if I liked working with children. I did! Keeping a diary proved to be the most valuable part of this summer. Many times I have compared it with records of future years and thought of different ways I could have handled situations in view of deeper understanding.

At Camp Felicia I had my first twenty-four hour experience with children as well as the first experience in charge of a group. It was very exciting. With little equipment we were forced to improvise many things. Many is the time I argued methods of handling children with more traditional counsellors, although I had not yet had any theory. (I also learned to clean hair of knots & to get along with my special mouse who seemed to live under the bureau although I could never find this hole).

From camp I went to college slightly soured with American democracy. In my innocence I decided England was better and that we should approach her methods. It took me a long while to get over this disillusionment - longer because college itself was not as challenging as I had hoped. Physiology however awakened my interest & I decided to become a Doctor. Therefore in the summer I worked in a hospital. This strengthened my desire, but my inability the master the

sciences, and lack of desire to work so many years made me switch into the social sciences & child study. The next summer as head of a unit of the YWCA day camp I delighted in working out the plans and carrying <sup>4</sup> them through. This was probably the most satisfying summer I ever spent. The children were interesting & presented many problems. Many of them were sent to camp to let their parents have some peace - and I think we got more than our share of so-called problem children.

This last year at college has been a rounding out one for me. Having decided definitely to work with children, I have taken course directed to this goal. Whereas last year I roomed with three other girls, this year I have one roommate. The two of us are on best of terms, and have both loved the arrangement. She is a chemistry major. Around us live ~~Robey~~ an economics & psychology major, a music, and an English major. The five of us spend many hours discussing our philosophies, and also the current events. That this has been a very stimulating group partially accounts for the satisfaction this year has offered me. As a reporter for the paper, I have been in on many exciting college events. The height of my career was interviewing Mrs. Roosevelt and Senator Mead.

In general this year has helped me develop insights into my special abilities. I find that I am more interested in people



than ~~remote~~ the more objective sciences. I have become a firm believer in democracy and want to ~~let~~ see its mechanisms improved. It seems to me that I can make my most effective <sup>as well as congenial</sup> contributions through teaching or social work. I pride myself on being able to join many groups of girls in the house and enjoy their conversation. Thus I find much satisfaction in a wide variety of people.

Most educational for me have been three people who have come to talk over their problems with me throughout the year. <sup>I have</sup> ~~learned~~ <sup>learned</sup> to listen and to comment tactfully rather than to judge or criticize. I have also learned much more about human nature. Thus this whole year has ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> culminating been a culminating one and one that has made me feel ready ~~and~~ and eager to go into the wide, wide world.